

ALLOWABLE MILK SUBSTITUTIONS FOR NONDISABLED CHILDREN

in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Nutrition Programs

Public schools, private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) participating in the USDA school nutrition programs (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack Program, Seamless Summer and Special Milk Program) must follow the federal requirements for milk substitutions for nondisabled children. These requirements apply to meal accommodations for children **without disabilities** who cannot drink milk, i.e., children who do not have a life-threatening food allergy to milk.

Each school food authority (SFA) has the **option** to make this accommodation by offering one or more allowable fluid milk substitutes for children without disabilities. If the SFA chooses to make allowable milk substitutions available, they must be available for all students when requested by their parent or guardian. These substitutions are at the expense of the SFA.

The following criteria apply only to milk substitutes for children **without** disabilities. Dietary accommodations for children with disabilities must continue to follow the USDA requirements specified in the Connecticut State Department of Education's guide, [Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs](#).

ALLOWABLE FLUID MILK SUBSTITUTES

SFAs can choose to offer **one or more** allowable fluid milk substitutions, including:

- **lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk** that is low-fat (1%) unflavored, fat-free unflavored or fat-free flavored; and
- **allowable nondairy beverages** such as soy milk that meet the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes. For more information, see “USDA Nutrition Standards for Milk Substitutes” on page 2.



The USDA recommends that lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk is the first choice for a student who has lactose intolerance.

SFAs can choose to offer only one milk substitution such as lactose-free low-fat unflavored milk. If students decide not to take this option, the SFA is not obligated to offer any other milk substitutions. SFAs could also choose (but are not required) to offer a second option of a nondairy beverage that meets the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes

JUICE AND WATER SUBSTITUTES

Juice and water cannot be offered as milk substitutes for children without disabilities at any time. If a SFA chooses to make milk substitutions available, they can only include either lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk (low-fat unflavored, fat-free unflavored or fat-free flavored), or a nondairy beverage that meets the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes. Lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk and nondairy beverages are the only two options allowed by the USDA as milk substitutions for children without disabilities in school nutrition programs.



ALLOWABLE MILK SUBSTITUTIONS, continued

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Milk substitutions for children without disabilities do not require a medical statement from a recognized medical authority. Parents/guardians may request a nondairy milk substitute in writing without providing a medical statement. The written request from the parent/guardian must identify the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet and requires the substitution.

The provision allowing a statement from a parent or guardian applies only to milk substitutions for nondisabled children. It does not apply to any other substitutions of foods or beverages in school meals for nondisabled children. Any other meal variations (other than milk substitutions for nondisabled children with medical or other special dietary needs) continue to require a medical statement from a recognized medical authority. SFAs can only make these accommodations based on written documentation from a recognized medical authority, not written or verbal communication from a parent/guardian. For more information, see the CSDE's guide, *Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs*.

USDA NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR MILK SUBSTITUTES

SFAs that choose to offer a nondairy milk substitute as part of reimbursable meals for nondisabled children can only use products that meet the USDA nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes.

Nutrients per Cup (8 fluid ounces)	
Calcium: 276 milligrams (mg)	Phosphorus: 222 mg
Protein: 8 grams (g)	Potassium: 349 mg
Vitamin A: 500 international units (IU)	Riboflavin: 0.44 mg
Vitamin D: 100 IU	Vitamin B-12: 1.1 micrograms (mcg)
Magnesium: 24 mg	



It is important to note that the Nutrition Facts label does not provide sufficient information to determine if a product complies with the required amount for each of the nine nutrients above. SFAs must obtain manufacturer documentation to indicate that a product contains the required amount for each nutrient in the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes.

Almond milk and rice milk products do not currently meet these standards. Certain brands of soy milk are the only available nondairy milk products that currently meet the USDA nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For a list of allowable products, see the CSDE's *List of Acceptable Food and Beverages*.

In addition to meeting the USDA nutrition standards, any nondairy milk substitutes sold in **public schools**, either as part of school meals or a la carte, must meet the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Nondairy milk substitutes may be flavored but must contain no artificial sweeteners, no more than 4 grams of sugar per ounce, no more than 35 percent of calories from fat and no more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. **Nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet both federal and state standards cannot be served as part of reimbursable meals or sold a la carte in public schools.** The state beverage requirements do not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Consult the CSDE's *List of Acceptable Food and Beverages* for products that meet federal and state requirements.

ALLOWABLE MILK SUBSTITUTIONS, continued

RESOURCES

Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs. Connecticut State Department of Education, Revised January 2013. www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/student/nutritioned/accommodatingspecialdiets.pdf

Final Rule: Fluid Milk Substitutions in the School Nutrition Programs (73 FR 52903), September 12, 2008. www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/091208.pdf

Operational Memorandum 3-09, Final Rule on Fluid Milk Substitutions. Connecticut State Department of Education, November 14, 2008. www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/09/om_03_09.pdf

Operational Memorandum 23-09, Q & A's: Milk Substitution for Children with Medical or Special Dietary Needs (Nondisability). Connecticut State Department of Education, September 4, 2009. www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/09/om_23_09.pdf

USDA Memo SP 02-2009, Final Fluid Milk Substitution Rule. U.S. Department of Agriculture, October 16, 2008. www.fns.usda.gov/sp02-2009-final-fluid-milk-substitution-rule

USDA Memo SP 29-2011, Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk. U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 14, 2011. www.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-requirements-fluid-milk

USDA Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions in the School Nutrition Programs. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Revised November 12, 2009. www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/10/om_03_10_q&a.pdf

For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Special Diets](#) Web page or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

This handout is available at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/milk_sub.pdf.

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